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News Release

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Signing ceremony begins shoreline protection project at Smith Island

Baltimore – Today, during a special ceremony at Smith Island, Md., representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources signed a Project Cooperation Agreement to begin construction of a shoreline protection project that will prevent further erosion of the island's coastal habitats.

Construction of the Tylerton Shoreline Protection Project will begin this summer. This work involves building a bulkhead along the island's western shoreline to prevent further erosion. To protect the island's southern edge, a stone structure will be built to slow erosion and shield against damages to wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation. (*See attached maps for amounts of lost habitats*). Corps officials estimate this work will take about one year to complete and cost approximately \$2 million.

To help ensure the timely development of this project, the Corps of Engineers will streamline the design and construction aspects of this project by combining these functions into a single "design-build" contract. This is the first time this innovative contracting approach is being used by the Corps of Engineers for a cost-shared civil works project. Corps officials are confident this innovative contracting method will save both money and time in the development of this project.

"Since the mid-1800s Smith Island has steadily lost its shorelines and marshlands to the waters of the Chesapeake Bay," said Col. Bruce A. Berwick, commander of the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Today, homes, roads, utility lines and an entire way of life for those who inhabit Maryland's last offshore island face a similar fate. Many agree that unless something is done soon, these resources will be lost, too."

This shoreline protection project is one part of a larger effort to study ways to restore and protect other areas of the island. Next year, work will be completed on a comprehensive feasibility study that is investigating other water resources problems impacting the island. The results of this study will help officials determine if additional efforts are needed to protect the resources of this unique area.